Al-Hidaya
No 5

ASHURA

All Praise to Allah, who has blessed us with the final Rasul, Hazrat Muhammad (S.A.W.) who brought a complete Deen upon which the Sahabah (R.A.) acted and obtained success in every field. **This leaflet is a summary of a booklet which was compiled under auspicious guidance of Sheikhul Hadith Hazrat Moulana Fazlur Rehman of Darul Uloom, Azaadville. May Allah grant him long life.**

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF MUHARRAM AND ASHURA

From time to time many booklets and pamphlets are published wherein some baseless "facts" appear. Thus it is imperative that full references be furnished in all publications. It is in this light that this pamphlet on Muharram has been compiled with quotations from authentic sources only.

THE SACRED MONTHS

From among the months of the Islamic year, the "Ashurul Hurum" (Sacred Months) enjoy a greater significance. Hafiz Ibn Khateer (R.A.) has quoted the saying of Hazrat Qatadah (R.A.) in his famous tafseer. He writes:

"Allah Ta'aala has indeed distinguished some of His Creation. From among man and Jinn He has chosen Messengers. He has granted special virtue to His remembrance (Zikr) over all speech and talk. From the land He has chosen the Masaajid. He distinguished the Day of Jumu'ah (Friday) from amongst the days and Lailatul Qadr (the Night of POwer) from amongst the nights. Therefore respect what Allah Ta'aala has honoured for verily to honour things due to the virtue which Allah Ta'aala bestowed upon them is among the traits of the intelligent." (Tafseer Ibn Khateer, vol. 2, pg. 369)

The sanctity of the "Ashurul Hurum" has been mentioned by Allah Ta'aala Himself in the Qur'aan-e-Kareem. Allah Ta'aala Says:

"Lo! The number of the months with Allah is twelve months by Allah's ordinance on the day that He created the heavens and the earth. Four of them are sacred: that is the right Deen. So wrong not yourselves in them." (Surah Tauba, verse 36)

The sanctity of these four months was observed in the Shari'ah of all the Ambiyaa. Hence all preached to their followers that any act of obedience and virtue in these months earn an increased reward. Likewise any transgression or disobedience perpetrated in these months is more severe and the sin is multiplied. In the Shari'ah of various Ambiyaa, wars and fighting (even for just causes) too was forbidden. (Extracted from Ma Ariful Qur'aan, vol. 4, pg. 370)

THE MONTH OF MUHARRAM

The Rasul of Allah Ta'aala has described the fasts of this month as the best fasts after the month of Ramadaan. In a Hadith Rasulullah (S.A.W.) is reported to have said:

"The best of fasts besides the month of Ramadaan is the fasting of Allah's month of Muharram and the best of Salaahs besides the Fardh (obligatory Salaat) is the Tahajjud Salaah (performed after midnight)." (Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, pg. 368)

"He who fasts on the Day of Arafat, his fast will be a compensation for the sins of two years and the one that keeps a fast in the month of Muharram will receive the reward of thirty fasts for each fast (in the sacred month)." (At Targheeb Wat Tarheeb, vol. 2, pg. 114)

FASTING ON THE DAY OF ASHURA (10TH OF MUHARRAM)

Ibn Abbas (R.A.) says:

"I did not see the Messenger of Allah Ta'aala anxiously await the fast of any day, which he gave preference to over other days, but this day (i.e. the Day of Ashura) and this month (i.e. the month of Ramadaan)." (Sahih Bukhari, vol 2, pg. 268)

In various Ahaadith an explanation is given as to why Rasulullah (S.A.W.) kept this fast and exhorted his companions to do the same. A narration of Sahih Muslim concisely explains the reason.Ibn Abbas (R.A.) narrates that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) came to Madinah and found the Jews fasting on the Day of Ashura. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) inquired of them: "What is the significance of this day on which you fast?" They replied: "This is great day. On this day Allah Ta'aala saved Moosa and his people and drowned Firoun and his nation." Thus Moosa (A.S.) fasted on this day as a token of thanksgiving, therefore we too fast on this day."

The Rasul of Allah Ta'aala said:

"We are more worthy of Moosa (A.S.) and nearer to him than you." Thereafter he fasted on this day and ordered his companions that a fast be kept on this day. (Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, pg. 359)

From the above Hadith it is clear that the fast of Ashura is linked to the salvation of Moosa (A.S.). Besides this no other Hadith of this category (Sahih) explains the reason for Rasulullah (S.A.W.) having kept a fast on this day.

FORGIVENESS OF A YEARS SINS

With regards to the blessings of this fast, it is recorded in a narration of Sahih Muslim that Rasulullah (S.A.W.) was asked regarding (the virtue of) the fast of Ashura. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) answered:

"It is a compensation for the sins of the past year, i.e. the sins of the year that has just gone by will be forgiven." (Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, pg. 368)

OPPOSING THE JEWS

Any act which bears the resemblance with the Jews and the Christians is frowned upon in the Shari'ah. Rasulullah (S.A.W.) said:

"Should I live the following year, I will definitely fast on the ninth also." (Sahih Muslim, vol. 1, pg. 359)

Hence it is important that either the ninth or the 11th of Muharram should be joined in keeping fast with the Day of Ashura. To fast only on the Day of Ashura is Makrooh (reprehensible).

However, the "Karahat" (reprehensibility) is not severe. It is stated in Durrul Mukhtar:

"It is `Makrooh Tahrimi' to fast on the days of Eid and `Makrooh Tanzihi' to fast on the Day of Muharram only." (Durrul Mukhtar, vol. 2, pg. 114)

SPENDING FREELY ON ONE'S FAMILY

Besides fasting on the Day of Ashura, being generous to one's family and spending on what is normally spent on food etc. is a very meritorious act. Certain scholars are of the opinion that the Ahaadith in this regard are not authentic, hence there is no special virtue for increased generosity on the Day of Ashura. However this is not correct. To substantiate this, Allamah Sakhawi (R.A.) writes:

"He who will be generous on his family on the Day of Ashura, Allah will be generous to him throughout the year." This Hadith has been transmitted by Tabrani and Baihaqi in his book "Ash-Shuab" and fadaail-ul-Awqaat, and Abu Shaikh, all of them having narrated it from Ibn Masood. Tabrani and Baihaqi have also transmitted it from Abu Saeed (R.A.). In his book "Ash-Shuab", Baihaqi has also narrated this Hadith from Jaabir and Abu Hurairah. Baihaqi therefore says: "The chains of narrators of these Ahaadith are `Daeef' (weak). However, when they are considered collectively, the chain of narrators becomes strong (i.e. the Hadith becomes reliable).

Allamah Shaami too has indicated towards the authenticity of this Hadith. He says: **"The Hadith of generosity upon ones family is an established and authentic (Sahih) narration as mentioned by Hafiz Suyuti in `Ad-Durar'." (Shaami, vol. 2, pg. 155)**

RECTIFICATION OF BELIEF

Many erroneous beliefs exist regarding the Day of Ashura. It is necessary that such beliefs be discarded.

The Day of Ashura is regarded by many people as the day of mourning the martyrdom of Sayyidina Husein (R.A.). To attribute the significance of Ashura to the martyrdom of Sayyidina Husein is baseless. The significance of Ashura is from the time of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) whilst Sayyidina Husein (R.A.) was martyred fifty years later than the demise of Rasulullah (S.A.W.).

Similarly, the significance of Ashura is attributed to many such occurrences and events, most of which are not proven by authentic sources.

In refutation of such fallacious beliefs and customs, Sheikh Abdul Haq Muhaddith Dahlawi (R.A.) writes:

"Beware, do not participate in innovations of the Rawafidh. Do not involve yourself in mourning, lamenting and displaying grief. This is not the conduct of Believers or else the date of the demise of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) would have been more worthy of being observed (by mourning and lamenting)."

Similarly, refrain from participating in the innovations of those who harbour hatred for the Ahlul-bait (the family of Rasulullah (S.A.W.) or the innovations of the ignorant; those who oppose corruptions with corruption, innovations with innovation and evil with sin. Hence they display great joy and happiness. They regard this day as an occasion of merrymaking and adornment and indulge in Khidaab, applying surmah, wearing new clothes, spending lavishly and cooking various foods which are not generally prepared. All these actions are regarded as Sunnah by these ignorant people whereas the true Sunnah is to shun these practices, since no authentic narration sanctioning such actions has been recorded. (Ma thabata bis Sunnah, pg. 254)

Regarding the various beliefs about the significance of the Day of Ashura; many of which are often quoted even in our time; Sheikh Muhaddith Dahlawi (R.A.) writes:

"It is said that:

a. The person who applies 'surmah' on the Day of Ashura will not have sore eyes for the entire year.

b. The person that takes a bath on this day will not fall ill till the next year.

c. The person who spends freely on his family on the Day of Ashura, Allah Ta'aala will increase his sustenance for the whole year.

and the claims such as:

1. The virtue of Salaah on this day.
2. On this day the repentance of Adam (A.S.) was accepted.
3. The Ark of Nuh (A.S.) settled on mount 'Judi' when the flood waters subsided.
4. Ibrahim (A.S.) was removed from the fire.
5. Ismail (A.S.) was saved from being sacrificed.
6. Yusuf (A.S.) was returned to Yaqoob (A.S.).

All the above are FABRICATIONS EXCEPT the Hadith of spending freely on one's family. However one of the narrators is not absolutely reliable." (Ma thabata Bis Sunnah, pg. 254)

From the list of fabrications which have been quoted from Sheikh Muhaddith Dahlawi (R.A.), the Ark of Nuh (A.S.) settling on the mountain will be excluded from being a fabricated Hadith. This exclusion is due to the Hadith which appears in the "Musnad" of Imaam Ahmad (A.S.) vol. 2, pg. 359.

CONCLUSION

The Day of Ashura is a great day. While observing it's greatness, let us shun all innovations and unfounded customs which deprive us of blessings and reward. Let us firmly cling onto the Qur'aan and Sunnah and attain success of both the worlds. Ameen

Printed By: Jet Printers Tel.: 331-3617 / 331-5951